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NAME OF AUTHOR.....Kenneth Frank Tilly.....

TITLE OF THESIS.....The Effect of First Names.....

.....on Impression Formation.....

.....

UNIVERSITY....of Alberta.....

DEGREE FOR WHICH THESIS WAS PRESENTED....M.A.....

YEAR THIS DEGREE GRANTED.....1975.....

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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

The Effect of First Names on Impression Formation

by

Kenneth F. Tilly

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF MASTER OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT . . . . . Psychology . . . . . .

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

FALL, 1975

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled The Effect of First Names on Impression Formation

submitted by Kenneth F. Tilly

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

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Abstract

In the first part of the study female students rated males described by a first name and three trait adjectives as to their desirability as a date. In the second part the subjects rated each person again but this time based only on the name and what they could remember of the adjective description. Parts I and II were used to test the hypotheses that the person's name, and its frequency of occurrence in the general population, would significantly affect his desirability as a date. The design also allowed for a comparison of the importance which subjects attached to a name vs an adjective description and for an indication of the stereotypes attached to different names.

The results showed no effect for name frequency on either the first or second date rating, however there was a significant effect for the names themselves on the second rating. This was interpreted to mean that names may take on importance in impression formation in the absence of other descriptive information. It was also found in part II that people with high frequency names tended to be stereotyped as extraverted and those with low frequency names as introverted. No difference in rated attractiveness or humorousness was found. It was concluded generally that first names can effect impressions depending on the amount of other information available but that frequency of occurrence alone is not enough to explain their effects.

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Introduction

Person perception is concerned with learning about and knowing other people. Historically, the field of person perception has been split into three lines of research (Tagiuri, 1969). Work began with research on the recognition of emotions in others. Interest then turned to the perception of personality characteristics. One aspect of this research dealt with accuracy of judgment and the characteristics of the more and less accurate judges. The other area focused primarily on impression formation, how information about another is processed. In this thesis the literature dealing specifically with impression formation will first be reviewed. The review will lead to a rationale for the present study which involved comparing the relative weight assigned to first names and trait adjectives in forming first impressions.

In general, the processes of impression formation function to simplify our social interactions. They organize a complex set of stimuli about others into a stable and consistent pattern and thus allow the perceiver to deal more effectively with others. People will form impressions of others from only a brief observation of them or from a description of only a few of their characteristics; and these impressions tend to be meaningful, organized and consistent (Hastorf, Schneider and Polefka, 1970).

Research in the impression formation area has followed several slightly different paths (Hastorf et.al., 1970). One has been concerned with the processes by which we infer characteristics of others from information provided by the experimenter. A second line of research has dealt with inferring characteristics of others from their actual behavior in a social setting. The difference is that in the first case the perceiver bases his judgment on abstract representations of the person such as trait descriptions or photographs whereas in the second case the judgment is based on the person's actions in some situation. A third area of interest has concentrated not so much on the relationship between stimulus and response traits as on how the stimuli themselves are organized, how they are combined and processed to form an impression. Each of these areas of research will be examined in turn with the intent of shedding light on the possible influence of first names on first impressions.

The work of Solomon Asch (1946) focused attention on the processes of impression formation, specifically those processes which involve drawing inferences about others from descriptive information about them rather than from their behavior. He considered two possible models of impression formation. One was an additive model which stated that the final impression is based on the sum of the various independent impressions. He also presented a modified version of this model which included a "general impression" factor which would shift the evaluation

of the separate traits in its general direction. The second model, which he preferred, asserts that we form an impression of the entire person, the traits being immediately organized into a gestalt. This implies that each trait is influenced by each of the others and that the final impression cannot be adequately predicted by taking each of the traits separately.

In Asch's studies, the Ss were usually read a list of traits supposedly describing a person and then asked to write their impressions in a short paragraph. His major findings supported his idea of an impression being formed of the entire person. He found that separate traits did not have equal weight in the impression but that some traits are "central" in that they seem to imply more about the individual than the others. The final impression seems to be organized around the central traits. He also found that whether or not a trait was central to the impression depended on the context, on its relationship to all the other stimulus traits. The basic concept of central traits, the idea that a particular dimension is highly associated with many other traits, is still valid today. However, it is understood that centrality depends not only on the context but also on the particular characteristics the judges are asked to determine, as will be seen shortly (Freedman, Carlsmith and Sears, 1970, chapter 2).

Bruner and Tagiuri (1954) felt that the inferences we draw from partial information are generated by an "implicit theory of personality" that each of us has. An implicit theory of personality refers to

the assumptions we all make about the nature of other people, assumptions about the associations among different traits. Some of their findings were contrary to Asch's interpretations, however, as they showed that inferences drawn from two traits taken together can be predicted from the inferences drawn from the individual traits. (Bruner, Shapiro and Tagiuri, 1958). Wishner's 1960 study shed some light on both the "implicit theory of personality" idea of Bruner et.al. and Asch's "central traits". He had undergraduates rate their instructors on 53 of the traits used by Asch and then he determined the correlations among all of them. He showed that the centrality of a trait depends more on its correlation with the response traits than with the stimulus traits, as was suggested by Asch. This study thus showed that an implicit personality theory may be viewed as a set of correlations among traits which each of us possesses.

There is a tendency for people to assume that others are similar to them. Thus, the perceiver may assign traits to another which the perceiver himself possesses. This means that the perception of another person may often be influenced more by what the perceiver is like than the actual characteristics of the perceived. This corresponds with a finding by Dornbush, Hastorf, Richardson, Muzzy and Vreeland (1965) that the dimensions used by perceivers to judge others differed more among the perceivers themselves than among the persons being judged. This supports the notion of implicit personality theories for it

implies that each of us has his own ideas about which traits are important for characterizing people.

Closely related to the idea of central traits is the tendency for people to make inferences in terms of a few basic dimensions. Osgood, Suci and Tannenbaum (1957) found that the three dimensions of evaluation (good-bad), potency (strong-weak) and activity (active-passive) accounted for practically all the variation in Ss' descriptions of various items, with evaluation counting for one-half to two-thirds of the reliable rating variance. Once a person is labeled "good", for example, this tends to influence further inferences so that he is seen a having all "good" qualities, the so called "halo effect" (Freedman et.al., 1970, chapter 2).

Implicit theories of personality are essentially stereotypes we hold of other people (Hastorf et.al., 1970). They define a stereotype as a set of characteristics which is assumed to fit a category of people. Like an implicit theory of personality, stereotyping involves identifying a person with one or more characteristics and then inferring from the identification a host of other characteristics believed to go along with it. In general, it has been shown that given some trait information about a person, most people go on to make inferences about a variety of other traits which were not given directly in the information about him. Assuming that people hold stereotypes of different first names, we hope to show that names, acting through implicit theories of personality, can significantly affect the first

impressions we form of other people.

We have looked at the processes of impression formation in the context of inferring characteristics of people from various types of descriptive information. We shall now look at the research dealing with the process of inferring dispositional properties of the person from their actual behavior in social situations. Fritz Heider (1944, 1958) spurred interest in this area with his work on phenomenal causality. His central idea is that people perceive behavior as being caused and the cause is seen as either the person (internal causality) or the environment (external causality). He further distinguishes between personal and impersonal causality. Impersonal causality includes external causality plus those internally caused events not intended by the doer. Personal causality is that subset of internal causality which includes only those things the person intended to do. Heider notes that a person is only held responsible for the personally caused effects and thus it is only those effects which are useful in inferring the person's dispositional qualities. Thus, if one can attribute a few stable dispositions to a person it enables him to better predict his behavior and to maintain a constant image of the person despite great variation in his actions.

Heider's model was somewhat refined by Jones and Davis (1965). They use the term "correspondence" to describe the extent to which a particular action of a person can be ascribed to a dispositional

quality. In other words, the greater the degree of certainty with which we make our inferences about another's dispositions the higher is the correspondence. Jones and Davis list some variables which they believe should affect correspondence. Correspondence is said to vary directly with the "hedonic relevance" and the inferred "personalism" of the actor's behavior and its effects. And it varies inversely with the social desirability and the number of "noncommon" effects of the behavior. These variables function, essentially, to help the perceiver determine whether or not the observed behavior is due to personal causality and thus to a stable dispositional quality, although the perceiver is not necessarily conscious of doing so. For example, the less socially desirable an action, the more it differs from what people would normally do, the more information it contains about the actor and the greater its correspondence. A similar argument may be made for the commonality of a person's first name. The less frequently a name appears in the population the more information it may contain for the perceiver.

A person's attributions may also be influenced by the interaction between the perceiver and the perceived; they are both simultaneously the observer and observed. In each interaction then there is a cycle of perceiving and acting on each person's part each influencing the other in a continuing process. That a name is often the first piece of information a person has about another is

important in this regard, for not only do our expectations of the other's personality affect how we act toward him but there is also evidence (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968) that our expectations of the other person can influence the other's behavior in a self-fulfilling manner, thus confirming the original perception.

In summary, we have looked at some of the processes in impression formation which deal with drawing inferences about another either from some minimal descriptive information about him or from his own behavior. We have seen that these processes function to bring order to and simplify our social environment, by allowing for stability in our perceptions of others. Stability is attained through the use of implicit theories of personality which allow us to attend to and use only a minimal number of characteristics of a person and infer the rest from those. Stability also results from attributional processes from which we infer another's dispositional qualities and thus make sense of his behavior in spite of his varied actions.

We can now turn to that line of research which has dealt with how the descriptive information, the stimulus traits themselves, are combined and processed to form an impression. Most research on information integration seems to have centered on two problems, order effects and the linear combination of information.

Asch (1946) presented evidence for a "primacy effect", the tendency for the information presented first to remain the salient feature of the

perceiver's description. He found that if positive information about a person is presented before negative information, the overall impression tends to be more positive than if the information is presented in reverse order. Asch contended that this occurred because the first terms in the set, set up a "direction" which then exerts a continuous effect on the latter terms. Each succeeding term comes not as a separate term but is related to the established direction. Evidence for this interpretation comes also from Anderson and Lampel (1965) whose results showed that Ss' evaluations of individual traits changed as a function of their context.

An alternative explanation for primacy effects is that the latter information is merely "discounted" in importance. Anderson and Jacobson (1965) found that Ss attached less weight to information which was inconsistent with the bulk of previous information about a person. And primacy effects have been shown to disappear when Ss are forced to pay attention to all the information, as when they are told they will be asked to remember the descriptions (Anderson & Hubert, 1963). For the present it seems that neither the change in meaning nor the discounting interpretation can be ruled out entirely, probably both occur depending on conditions.

The second question concerns the relative merits of a summation vs averaging model to account for the way people combine given

information. A summation model predicts that the final impression will be simply the weighted sum of the evaluations of the individual items. According to the averaging model, however, the final impression will be some weighted average impression of the components. The essential difference in the two models is that, for a given evaluation, the summation model predicts that the addition of any positive trait will result in a higher evaluation whereas with the averaging model only the addition of a trait with a value greater than the present average will increase the evaluation. The evidence is somewhat mixed. Fishbein and Hunter (1964) showed that a person is evaluated more positively when characterized by five positive traits than when only characterized by two positive traits. However, Anderson (1965, 1968) seems to be able to explain most of the results so far with a weighted average model. He has shown that the addition of moderately positive traits to highly positive traits results in a lowering of the evaluation, contrary to a summation model. And he is able to account for the Fishbein and Hunter results by giving more weight to highly polarized traits. A more recent study by Warr and Smith (1970) however, seems to lessen the importance of this question. They compared the two models as well as four others and found that, for five of the six, including the summation and averaging models, the correlation between observed and predicted inferences was > .90. They point out that if only one of the models had been used to predict Ss' behavior the results would have been considered

as strong evidence in favor of that model.

Most of the research dealing with combining information in impression formation tasks has been done using homogeneous stimulus information, usually trait adjectives. Anderson and Lampel (1968), however, report a study in which Ss were given both verbal information (trait adjectives) and photographs of stimulus persons whom they were to judge for their desirability as a date. They found that the photographs interacted with the adjectives such that the adjectives had less effect on the Ss' ratings when combined with the less desirable photographs.

Heterogeneous information is common in everyday life. Photographs often accompany verbal information in descriptions. There is another type of information which is distinct from both photographs and trait adjectives but which has been neglected in impression formation research and that is a person's first name. In everyday situations names often occur with verbal information, indeed, they are common to almost all descriptions. It would thus seem worthwhile, in studying the integration of heterogeneous information, to look at the combination of names and verbal information.

First names have been studied before in different contexts. Besides those studies of an anthropological nature, dealing with the significance of names in various cultures, there have been two main areas of interest. One has been concerned with the idea that a name elicits

various associations which evoke reactions in the bearer. For example, Flugel (1930) thought that if one had the name of a famous person he may then emulate him. The other line of interest was that of relating relative frequency of names in the general population to such things as liking of the name, popularity and behavior disorders. For instance, both Walton (1937) and Allen, Brown, Dickenson and Pratt (1941) found that college students preferred common names, those occurring most frequently in the student population and in the culture, over less common names.

More recently, Kleinke, Staneski and Weaver (1972) found that, in an interview situation, a person who consistently used the other person's first name in an ingratiating situation was rated more negatively than the non-name user. But in a non-ingratiating situation the name user was rated more positively than the non-name user. McDavid and Harrari (1966) report a high correlation between rated social desirability of first names and sociometric popularity in elementary school children.

In most of these studies first names provide some information about a person. Buchanan and Bruning (1971) had undergraduates rate over 1000 names on three dimensions; active-passive, masculine-feminine and like-dislike. Overall they found considerable agreement between male and female raters for male names, although less for female names. They did not attempt to determine the factors involved in the different

ratings of the names. In a subsequent study (Bruning and Husa, 1972) it was found that names previously rated as "active" elicited correspondingly appropriate behavioral descriptions from grade school children.

These studies only serve to point up the obvious, that we all have stereotypes about different names. Certainly if we examine movies and television we can see that different characters consistently have certain types of names. And parents have definite ideas about which names are suitable or unsuitable for their newborn children.

Given that people do hold stereotypes of names, what does this imply for impression formation? We know from person perception literature that people can arrive at an evaluation of another from almost any piece of information. So, given just a name, our implicit theories of personality function to associate with it a host of other characteristics. It is important to realize here how names are used in everyday situations. For one thing, they occur with almost every description of a person. And secondly, they are usually the first item of information that one sees in a given description. We have seen from the research on primacy effects that there is evidence for some change in meaning for the latter items in the description, depending on the context set up by the initial information. Thus names could influence the impression in this manner.

Names are not only the first item given in any description but often

they are the only information a person has. In this respect, names might be compared to race as a variable. It has been shown (Stein, Hardyck and Smith, 1965) that when compared with a considerable amount of other information, a person's race isn't given much weight in the overall impression. But it does account for much of the variance in impressions when there is little other information available. And, as may often happen, if that is the only piece of information available, a person may avoid exposing himself to more. So names may get their importance in impression formation not only from their particular stereotypes but also from their unique position in the informational sequence.

Related to order effects is the notion of the self-fulfilling prophecy mentioned earlier. If a person has expectations about another because of that person's name he may behave toward him so as to cause those expectations to be fulfilled. Harari and McDavid (1973) had elementary school teachers grade compositions which actually differed only in the name attached. He found that papers supposedly written by students with names of Elmer and Hubert recieved scores consistently a full grade lower than those written by Michael and David.

It was mentioned earlier that Anderson and Lampel (1968) found an interaction between photographs and verbal information. In their study the adjectives had more effect with the more desirable photos than with those rated as less desirable. Should certain names result in

significantly better first impressions we might expect the same type of interaction in the present study. Trait adjectives might have more effect with the more popular names. If such an interaction occurs we might then ask what characteristics of names are important in this regard.

First names differ on a number of dimensions including frequency in the culture, ethnicity, popularity, age and socioeconomic class. Previous studies have employed frequency (Walton, 1937; Allen et. al., 1941) and popularity (McDavid & Harari, 1966; Harari & McDavid, 1973). In looking for characteristics of names which are important for impression formation, we would be interested in those which have some generality and can be objectively applied. Ethnic, age and class differences are more specific in their application and popularity is very subjective and variable. Frequency, however, is both easily objectified and is a very general characteristic. Moreover, frequency has already been shown to be correlated with popularity of names which has in turn been shown to be correlated with sociometric ratings of people with those names. There is also much evidence in the person perception literature that familiarity has a positive effect on liking. More specifically, Harrison (1969) found a strong positive correlation between Ss' estimates of familiarity and likability ratings for names. This would suggest that the more common the person's name the more favorably he would be judged. So of any single characteristic, frequency seems the most worthwhile to study in its relation to impression formation.

On the negative side, Tesser (1970) showed that the greater number of people that could be described by a particular trait, the less information it conveyed. This might suggest that the effect of a more frequent name may be lessened because of the little information it carries about the person.

The present study involved first presenting female Ss with a number of descriptions of university males consisting of a first name and three adjectives. Ss then rated each stimulus person in terms of his desirability as a date. This scale was chosen because, though measuring about the same thing as "liking", it was felt that it would be a more meaningful question to ask. In the second part of the experiment Ss were presented with the person's name by itself and asked to reproduce its original accompanying description. Of interest here was the nature of the errors made. Given that the descriptions for all of the names would be very difficult to remember it was felt that the Ss' ratings would be influenced by the name and would give some information about their stereotypes and how frequency was important in this regard. This hypothesis was based on the Stein et.al. (1965) finding that a person's race becomes significant in impression formation when there is little other information about the person available to the perceiver. Ss were also asked to rate each person again on datability. This enabled a comparison to be made with the first rating to shed some light on the relative weight attached to the name vs adjective

description. Both date ratings were also used to test the hypothesis that there would be significant differences among the names themselves regardless of their frequency. In the third part of the experiment the Ss rated each name on how often they thought it occurred in the general population. This was a check to see if perceived commonality of the names corresponded to that from the obtained distribution.

Method

Subjects: The Ss were 24 females who were fulfilling a course requirement for Introductory Psychology. Three were randomly assigned to each of the eight different name-adjective pairings necessary for a balanced design.

Stimulus Persons: Each stimulus person consisted of a male first name paired with a unique combination of three trait adjectives. The 24 names appear in Table 1. There were 8 names in each category of high, medium and low frequency of occurrence, as determined from a distribution of the names of all first year students at the University of Alberta. The high group consisted of the 8 names which occurred most often (from 90 - 135 times out of the sample of 6520), the medium - those clustering around the median frequency (33) and the low - those randomly chosen from names which occurred once in the sample.

Design: There were 6 different adjectives consisting of the pairs attractive - unattractive, introverted - extraverted and humorous - serious. They were chosen because they had been shown in previous work (Thorngate and Housch, 1972) to elicit significantly different datability ratings from Ss. There were 8 different combinations of 3 adjectives when chosen from these pairs. Each of these combinations was then paired with a name from each of the 3 frequency groups of names in a 3 (name frequency) X 2 X 2 X 2 design. Each stimulus thus consisted of a first name (with randomly chosen initial representing last name)

followed by 3 adjectives. The stimuli were presented to Ss on slides projected on a white background.

In the experimental task, each S was presented with 24 stimuli. Each of the 24 names appeared once and each of the 8 adjective combinations appeared 3 times, once with a high frequency name, once with a medium and once with a low. To control for name-adjective confounds, each of the 8 names in each frequency group was re-paired with each of the 8 adjective combinations for different Ss. For example, one S would be shown the name Robert paired with the adjectives unattractive, extraverted and humorous; another S would be shown Robert re-paired with attractive, extraverted and humorous etc.. Thus there were 8 different name-adjective re-pairings making for a balanced design. Three Ss were randomly assigned to each of the 8 pairings. For each of the 8 different pairings the stimuli were presented in a different random order for each S.

Procedure: Ss were told that this was an experiment in impression formation, studying how judgments are made of others on the basis of small amounts of information about them. For part I of the experiment they were told they would be presented with a number of descriptions of university males, each consisting of the person's first name and 3 adjectives describing him. It would be their job to rate each one as to his desirability as a date. The scale had 7 points ranging from 1 = "definitely not date" to 7 = "definitely date". The Ss were told

to glance back up at the screen after each rating when a new description would be shown.

After the Ss had rated all 24 descriptions they were told that the experimenter was also interested in how well they could remember how each person was described. For the second part of the experiment Ss were then presented with each name by itself (in a different random order) and asked to check off, on forms provided, the adjectives which originally accompanied it. At the same time they were again asked to rate the person on datability. In part III of the experiment, all 24 names were again presented to the Ss, one at a time in a different order, and this time they were asked to rate each one on how often they thought it occurred in the general population, from 1 = "very infrequently" to 7 = "very frequently".

Results

The results of the comparison between perceived and actual commonality of the names used in the study is given in Table 2. There was no overlap among the groups and the difference among means was highly significant ($p < .001$).

In order to test for the effects of name frequency, a 3 X 2 X 2 X 2 within subject analysis of variance was performed on the datability ratings for part I of the experiment. Table 3 contains a summary of this analysis. The mean datability ratings for each name and frequency group are given in Table 1. There was essentially no difference in mean datability ratings for the three frequency groups indicating that, averaged over all adjective combinations, frequency of the name made no difference in datability judgments.

Table 4 contains the mean ratings for each frequency group across each adjective pair. The differences in ratings, for each pair, pooled over all names, is highly significant. The person described as attractive, extraverted or humorous was consistently rated more desirable as a date regardless of his first name. The only significant interaction was that between humorous-serious and attractive-unattractive. The effect was such that the humorous-serious dimension was more important in judging an unattractive person than in judging an attractive person. Apparently if the person was described as attractive, it mattered less whether he was humorous or serious. If, however, he was described as

unattractive, other qualities became more important, in this case his degree of humor. The same type of interaction between attractiveness and humorousness was found by Thorngate and Housch in their 1972 study.

In the second part of the experiment the Ss were given the person's name alone and asked to reproduce his description. They were also asked to rate him on datability. Table 5 contains the analysis of variance summary for this second rating. Table 6 contains the mean datability ratings for each name and frequency group. The group means show a greater spread on this rating than on the first rating. Overall, however, the differences were still not significant. The means for each frequency group across the different adjective pairs for the second rating are given in Table 7. This time there were no significant differences in the ratings for any of the pairs, indicating that, for this rating, it made no difference how the person was described originally. There were no significant interactions in this case. For this second rating, then, the Ss did not appear to base their judgments on the original descriptive information. Name frequency may have had more influence in a situation like this where there was little else to base one's opinion on.

A correlation coefficient of + 0.15 was obtained between rated datability (part II) and rated frequency of the names and was significant at the .001 level with 574 d.f.. This shows, however, that only 2% of the variance was accounted for by frequency in this case so little weight can be attached to the statistical significance of the result.

The number and type of errors committed by the Ss in attempting to reproduce the original descriptions that accompanied the names might give some information about the stereotypes attached to the different names and how their frequency of occurrence influences this. Table 8 contains the total number of errors committed by the Ss in reproducing the descriptions for each combination of frequency and adjective pair. There were no essential differences in the amount of errors across either frequency or dimension.

Table 9 is a summary of the reproduced descriptions and shows the type of errors committed by the Ss. For each adjective pair under each frequency condition there were 192 responses, 24 Ss responding to 8 different names. An analysis of variance was performed comparing each adjective pair across all three frequency groups. The results showed a significant difference in the ratings on the introverted - extraverted dimension. There was a tendency for the Ss to attach the label "extraverted" to the high and medium frequency names and "introverted" to the low frequency names. There was also a tendency, though insignificant, to attach "attractive" to the high frequency names more often than medium or low frequency names.

Ss made two separate ratings of desirability as a date, one based on the person's name along with a three adjective description, the other based on just the name and whatever they could recall about him. It was seen that there was a greater spread among the mean ratings in the

second part, possibly indicating a tendency to rely more heavily on the name for the judgment if recall was doubtful. Another way to estimate the relative weight given to the name vs the adjective description is to look at the correlation between the two ratings when the names were identical and again when the descriptions were identical for both part I and part II. For example, in part I a S may have made a rating based on John: attractive-introverted-humorous, and in part II on John: (recalled) attractive-extraverted-serious. These two ratings were used in one set of correlations. The second set of correlations was based on the ratings made when the recalled descriptions exactly matched the original description regardless of whether or not the name was the same. Table 10 contains these correlations. There is an obvious difference between the correlations of the ratings for these two cases. The high correlation for the case when the recalled description matched the original indicates that when making the ratings, the Ss paid attention primarily to the adjective descriptions they recalled. The low correlations between the names does not tell us as much, for given that the first ratings were based primarily on the descriptions, even if the second rating had been based on names the correlations could still have been low. The fact that the correlations by dimension were so high, however, supports the first interpretation.

It was also hypothesized that there would be a significant difference in the ratings based on the names themselves. In order to test

for this a 1 X 24 analysis of variance was performed over all the names for both datability ratings. For the first rating there was no essential difference but for the second rating the analysis yielded an F which reached significance at the .05 level ($F = 1.53$; $df = 23, 552$). So, disregarding their grouping by frequency, the first names themselves did have a significant effect on the judgment.

Discussion

The first part of the experiment compared the influence of names and name frequency with the influence of trait adjectives in an impression formation task. There was no effect from the names themselves and the prediction that the frequency of occurrence of the first names would have an effect was also not upheld. It was seen that the greater part of the variance was accounted for by the three adjective dimensions. Apparently when Ss have this type of trait information available they don't use the name in making their judgments.

In the second part of the experiment, however, the Ss found the task somewhat different. This time they were given no information besides the person's name and had to base their judgments on that plus whatever they could remember about him. In this case it was seen that the original trait information had no effect on the ratings, but that name frequency did show such a tendency, though not strong enough for statistical significance. Moreover, by disregarding the frequency of the name, it was seen that, over all 24 names, there was a marginally significant difference in the ratings. This tends to show that when a person has less information to go on or that information is doubtful (e.g. recalled information) then the person's name may take on some significance.

How this influence of first names may be brought to bear is suggested by the correlation between the two datability ratings. We saw that when

the ratings were correlated by dimension when the recalled description matched the original description, that the coefficients were quite high, from .72 to .93. We can conclude from this that the Ss based their ratings essentially on their own recalled descriptions, although, as we saw in Tables 8 and 9, they bore no significant resemblance to the original descriptions. From this we might infer that the Ss, finding it extremely difficult to remember how each person was described, based their descriptions on the person's name, on their own name stereotypes. Indeed, this is what the vast majority of Ss reported after the experiment was over. In response to the debriefing they remarked that, finding it impossible to remember how all 24 "people" were described, they checked off the adjectives based on their impressions of the person's name.

This finding is in line with an implicit personality theory of impression formation which assumes that the name stereotypes would be responsible for the datability ratings acting through the recalled descriptions. For instance, a significant difference among frequency groups was found in the recalled information on the introverted - extraverted dimension.

If the Ss' implicit theories of personality were responsible for the significant difference in recalled information on the introverted - extraverted dimension, we might ask why there were no differences on the other two dimensions. The answer might lie in the fact that in the

initial datability rating, these two dimensions, attractive - unattractive and humorous - serious, accounted for most of the variance in the ratings whereas the introverted - extraverted dimension accounted for proportionately much less. If the Ss placed greater weight on these two dimensions they were likely to have attended more to them, with the opposite being true of the introverted - extraverted dimension. Because they were less well attended to and thus less well remembered, there would be more opportunity for an implicit personality theory to operate in the introverted - extraverted case which would result in greater differentiation of "recalled" descriptions. Alternatively, it may be that the introverted - extraverted dimension is a major component of name stereotypes and that the adjectives attractive - unattractive and humorous - serious are less readily called to mind.

That frequency of occurrance of first names did not significantly affect Ss' ratings of datability does not imply that names themselves are not important in this regard. Frequency is only one characteristic of names; they also differ, for example, in age, ethnicity and in "sound", besides their individual stereotypes from associations with popular figures and so on. Harari and McDavid (1973) found significant differences in grades assigned to papers differing only in the name attached. In two of these cases the name associated with the highly graded paper was a frequent and "socially desirable" name (David & Lisa) whereas in another case, the name "Adelle", which

was low in frequency and had been rated as less desirable, was associated with the higher grade. In the present study we saw that while frequency did not have a significant effect, there was a significant difference for the names themselves. It seems most reasonable to conclude then that there is more than one characteristic of names operating to produce their effects.

The results of part II of this study also suggest that when making a judgment about another person the name begins to have some importance only when the judge has very little else to go on. In such a case the person does appear to use the name. Perhaps one reason the present results were less than definite is that the rating task was too artificially objective for the Ss in that they would be likely to consciously avoid using the name in the datability rating because objectively it shouldn't "count". In everyday, less structured behavior, the tendency to use stereotypes is more likely to show itself.

The question of which characteristics of first names are involved in name effects has yet to be answered adequately. The present study has not shown name frequency, acting alone, to be a significant factor in impression formation. As mentioned above, it is likely that a number of factors combine to account for the effects of names. Stereotypes of individual names most likely have a number of components and which ones become salient probably depends on the type of judgment that is being made. With a datability judgment, as in the present study,

the introversion - extraversion dimension seemed to be important. In the Harari & McDavid (1973) study, an "academic" component may have been important for the Ss' task of assigning grades to papers. We know from Osgood et.al. (1957) that the evaluative component accounts for most of the variance in peoples' judgments so we may infer that it is also a strong component of name stereotypes. Since name frequency has been shown to be highly correlated with liking or popularity of names it is still felt that frequency may be a "general" component which is partly responsible for the name effects. What is missing is the "specific" component of the stereotype, the one most relevent to the judgment task. It may be that the combination of the "general" and "specific" component(s) is what was responsible for the name effect in the present study and also in Harari & McDavid's (1973) work. A consideration for further research in this area would be to do a preliminary rating of a pool of names based on this relevent specific factor and then select the names for the study based on these ratings in combination with frequency. One could then compare the "general" and "specific" component both in isolation and in combination to get a clearer understanding of what characteristics of names are important for first impressions.

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Appendix A

Table 1

Mean Datability Ratings by Name and Frequency Group (part I)

Frequency					
High		Medium		Low	
John	4.3	Raymond	4.1	Desmond	4.2
Robert	5.0	Wayne	4.8	Morris	4.7
David	4.5	Patrick	4.5	Elliot	3.9
William	4.1	Paul	4.1	Owen	4.5
Richard	4.4	Frank	4.7	Lowell	4.5
James	4.5	Gregory	4.7	Alvin	4.2
Brian	4.2	Gerald	4.3	Arron	4.0
Donald	3.9	Joseph	3.9	Tyler	3.8
Gp $\bar{X}$	4.4		4.4		4.2

Table 2

Rated Frequency of Occurrence of Names by Group

(1 = "very infrequent"; 7 = "very frequent")

Frequency					
High		Medium		Low	
John	6.9	Raymond	4.0	Desmond	1.4
Robert	6.8	Wayne	4.6	Morris	2.3
David	6.7	Patrick	4.7	Elliott	2.2
William	6.0	Paul	5.5	Owen	1.9
Richard	5.8	Frank	4.7	Lowell	1.5
James	6.3	Gregory	4.9	Alvin	1.9
Brian	6.2	Gerald	4.3	Arron	1.3
Donald	5.8	Joseph	4.7	Tyler	1.5
Gp $\bar{X}$	6.3		4.7		1.8

Note: Group means significantly different at .001 level.

Table 3

Analysis of Variance: First Datability Rating

Source	df	MS	F
Frequency (F)	2	1.42	1.29
Attractive-Unattractive (A)	1	726.75	133.33***
Introverted-Extraverted (I)	1	59.42	8.17**
Humorous-Serious (H)	1	281.96	83.33***
F X I	2	2.68	3.14
A X H	1	8.27	12.66***

Note: Only interaction sources whose F reached or approached significance are included.

**p < .01

***p < .001

Table 4

Mean Datability Ratings by Frequency and Dimension (part I)

	Dimension					
	Attract - Unattract		Intro - Extra		Humorous - Serious	
High	5.5	3.2	3.9	4.8	5.1	3.6
Medium	5.5	3.2	4.2	4.6	5.0	3.7
Low	5.3	3.1	3.9	4.6	4.9	3.5
Pooled	5.4	3.2	4.0	4.6	5.0	3.6

Table 5

Analysis of Variance: Second Datability Rating

Source	df	MS	F
Frequency (F)	2	13.41	2.71
Attractive-Unattractive (A)	1	9.51	1.69
Introverted-Extraverted (I)	1	0.69	0.27
Humorous-Serious (H)	1	0.56	0.11
A X I X H	1	10.03	3.47

Note: Only interaction sources whose F approached significance included, none reached significance.

Table 6

Mean Datability Ratings by Name and Frequency Group (part II)

Frequency					
High		Medium		Low	
John	5.0	Raymond	4.5	Desmond	4.1
Robert	4.6	Wayne	4.2	Morris	4.0
David	5.4	Patrick	5.0	Elliot	4.3
William	4.2	Paul	4.3	Owen	3.8
Richard	4.2	Frank	3.7	Lowell	4.2
James	4.1	Gregory	4.5	Alvin	3.4
Brian	4.9	Gerald	4.4	Arron	4.0
Donald	4.3	Joseph	4.0	Tyler	4.6
Gp $\bar{X}$	4.6		4.3		4.0

Table 7

Mean Datability Ratings by Frequency and Dimension (part II)

	Dimension					
	Attract - Unattract		Intro - Extra		Humorous - Serious	
High	4.7	4.4	4.6	4.6	4.7	4.5
Medium	4.4	4.3	4.3	4.4	4.4	4.3
Low	4.2	3.8	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.1
Pooled	4.4	4.2	4.3	4.4	4.4	4.3

Table 8

Errors in Reproduced Descriptions:

Total Number of Times Ss' Desriptions did not match original.

	Frequency			
Dimension	High	Medium	Low	Sum
Attract - Unattract	85	97	83	265
Intro - Extra	95	97	95	287
Humorous - Serious	93	106	96	295
Sum	273	300	274	

Note: Neither dimension nor frequency effect is significant.

Table 9

Subjects' Reproduced Descriptions by Frequency and Dimension: Total Number of Times each Adjective was Checked.

	Frequency		
	High	Medium	Low
Attractive	115	99	101
Unattractive	77	93	91
Introverted	79	87	109
*Extraverted	113	105	83
Humorous	96	90	93
Serious	96	102	99

Note: *indicates dimension whose differences across frequency were significant at .05 level.

Table 10

Correlation (r) Between First and Second Datability Ratings by Name and by Dimension for each Frequency Group

	Frequency		
	High	Medium	Low
by Name	.02	.13	.22
by Dimension	.93	.78	.72